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GOLDSMITH'S
TRAVELLER
AND THE
DESERTED
VILLAGE
GRAY'S ELEGY



Edited by R.M. Barton

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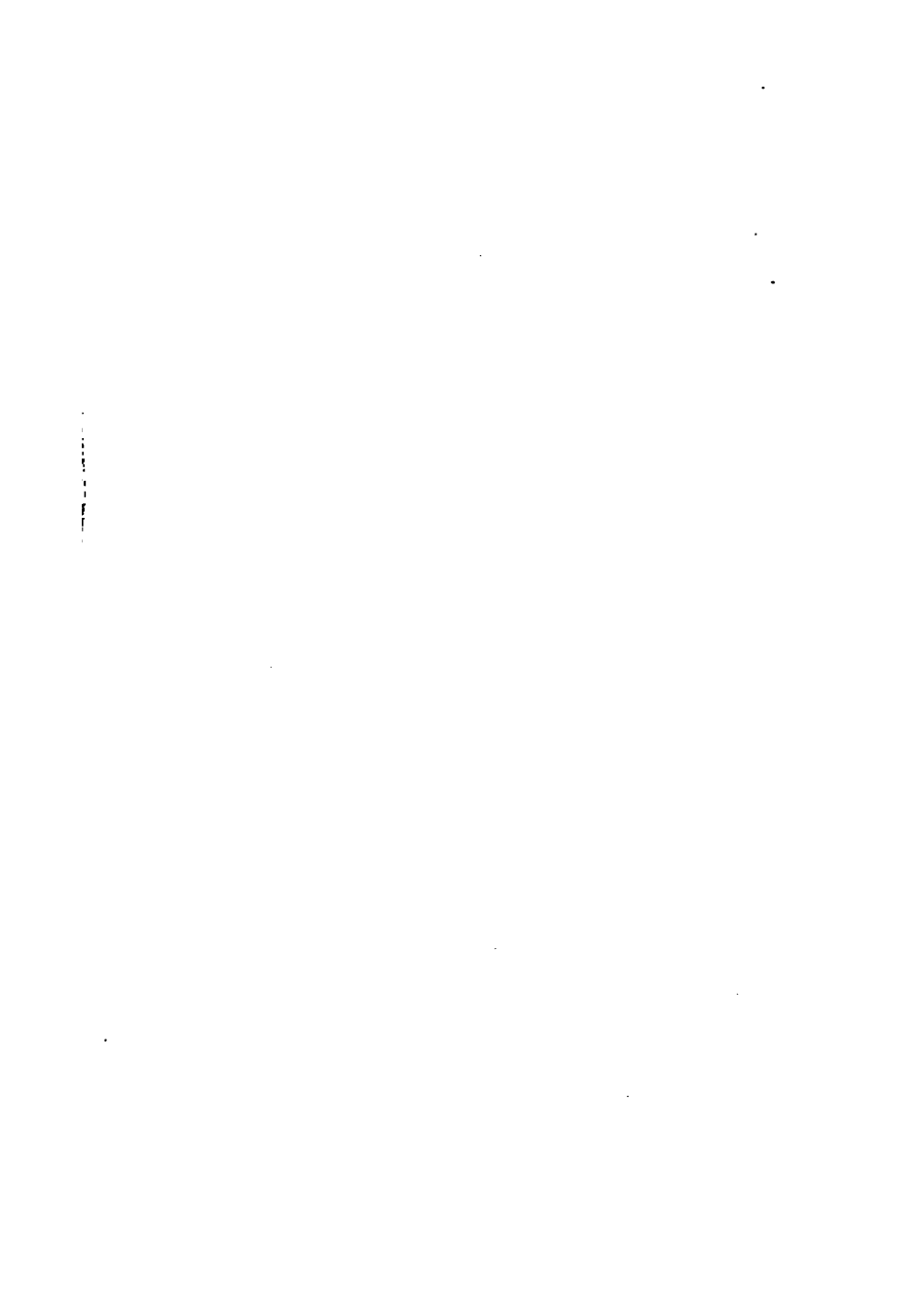


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Oliver Goldsmith

Heath's English Classics

GOLDSMITH'S
THE TRAVELLER
AND
THE DESERTED VILLAGE
AND
GRAY'S ELEGY IN
A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

EDITED BY
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NEW YORK CITY

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INTRODUCTION

LIFE OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728-1774

Birth

November 10, 1728, at the parsonage at Pallas, County of Longford, Ireland.

"Pallas is a mere cluster of two or three cottages, called in Ireland farmhouses, but which, to an English eye, would present only the appearance of huts. . . . There is nothing remarkable in the aspect of the country. It is rather flat, naked of trees, and cultivated by small tenants." — HOWITT, in *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets*.

Parents

Mother: Ann Jones, daughter of the Rev. Oliver Jones, master of the Diocesan school at Elphin.

Father: The Rev. Charles Goldsmith, portrayed in the village preacher of *The Deserted Village*, and in Dr. Primrose of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

The Goldsmiths were of English origin. The Irish branch emigrated to Ireland about the sixteenth century.

"Goldsmith sprang from a respectable, but by no means thrifty stock. Some families seem to inherit kindness and incompetency, and to hand down virtue and poverty from generation to generation. Such was the case with the Goldsmiths. 'They were always,' according to their own accounts, 'a strange family; they rarely acted like other people; their

hearts were in the right place, but their heads seemed to be doing anything but what they ought.' 'They were remarkable,' says another statement, 'for their worth, but of no cleverness in the ways of the world.' Oliver Goldsmith will be found faithfully to inherit the virtues and weaknesses of his race." — WASHINGTON IRVING, in *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*.

The Goldsmith Family

Eight children, five boys and three girls. Oliver was the second son. The first son, Henry, a pensioner at Trinity College, Dublin, distinguished himself, and obtained a scholarship in 1743. Preferred a simple, quiet life, and settled down as curate of Kilkenny West. Beloved by Oliver, who dedicated *The Traveller* to him.

Removal to Lissoy

The Rev. Charles Goldsmith succeeded to the parish of Kilkenny West in 1830, on the death of his wife's uncle. The family moved to Lissoy and settled on a farm of seventy acres.

"This was the scene of Goldsmith's boyhood, the little world whence he drew many of those pictures, rural and domestic, whimsical and touching, which abound throughout his works, and which appeal so eloquently to both the fancy and the heart." — WASHINGTON IRVING, in *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*.

"Lissoy consists now of a few common cottages by the roadside, on a flat and by no means particularly interesting scene." — HOWITT, in *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets*.

Early Education

1. "A dame's school," at the age of three. She considered Oliver one of the dullest boys she had ever attempted to instruct.

2. The village school at the age of six. The schoolmaster, Thomas Byrne, commonly called Paddy Byrne, was an old soldier, more fond of story-telling than of teaching. He is portrayed in the village master of *The Deserted Village*.

"There are certain whimsical traits in the character of Byrne, not given in the sketch of the schoolmaster in *The Deserted Village*. He was fond of talking of his vagabond wanderings in foreign lands, and had brought with him from the wars a world of campaigning stories, of which he was generally the hero, and which he would deal forth to his wondering scholars. These travelers' tales had a powerful effect upon the vivid imagination of Goldsmith, and awakened his unconquerable passion for wandering and seeking adventure.

"Byrne was, moreover, of a romantic vein, and exceedingly superstitious. He was deeply versed in the fairy superstitions which abound in Ireland, all of which he professed implicitly to believe. Under his tuition, Goldsmith soon became almost as great a proficient in fairy lore. . . .

"Another trait of Byrne was a disposition to dabble in poetry, and this likewise was caught by his pupil. Before he was eight years old, Goldsmith had contracted a habit of scribbling verses on small scraps of paper, which in a little while he would throw into the fire. A few of these sibylline leaves, however, were rescued from the flames and conveyed to his mother. The good woman read them with a mother's delight, and saw at once that her son was a genius and a poet. From that time she beset her husband with solicitations to give her boy an education suitable to his talents."—WASHINGTON IRVING, in *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*.

3. Prepared for college at Edgeworthstown, under the Rev. Patrick Hughes. Goldsmith was careless and indolent in his studies, but was very popular with his schoolmates.

College

In 1744, at the age of seventeen, entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar, or poor student.

Received the degree of B.A. in 1749.

The Rev. Thomas Contarine, who married the sister of Goldsmith's father, aided Goldsmith financially during his college days, and later in his attempts to choose a profession.

"At Trinity he was lodged in one of the top rooms adjoining the library of the building, numbered 35, where it is said his name may still be seen, scratched by himself upon a window-pane." — WASHINGTON IRVING, in *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*.

The Choice of a Profession. 1749-1755

1. The church: He was rejected by the bishop after two years of probation.

2. Teaching: He tried tutoring in the family of Mr. Flinn, a gentleman in the neighborhood, but found the task irksome.

3. New life in America: Discouraged, Goldsmith secured passage from Cork to America, but the ship sailed while he was attending a party in the country.

4. Law: Uncle Contarine raised fifty pounds to send him to London to study law, but he gambled away his money in Dublin, and returned home penniless.

5. Medicine: Dean Goldsmith of Cloyne advised medicine, so Oliver was sent to Edinburgh to study for a medical degree. He attended lectures, and did some desultory studying for eighteen months.

6. Continuation of medical studies in Leyden, Holland. Goldsmith remained here ten months, supporting himself by tutoring.

Pedestrian Tour on the Continent. 1755-1756

Flanders, France, Switzerland, Italy. Some say that he received the ~~degree~~ of Bachelor of Medicine at Louvain, in Flanders; ~~others say~~ at Padua, in Italy.

Goldsmith supported himself by playing on his flute, and by taking part in the disputes, or debates, at the universities. In the wanderings of George, the philosophic vagabond of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, we probably have a picture of Goldsmith himself, aimlessly rambling on foot over the continent. *The Traveller* is the literary result of this pedestrian tour.

Life in London. 1756-1759

1. An apothecary's assistant.
2. Practised medicine among the poor.
3. An usher in a school.
4. Hack work on the *Monthly Review*. Compensation: board, lodging, and a little pocket-money.
5. Appointment as post-surgeon on the coast of Coromandel revoked, probably through his own heedlessness and blunders.

Assumed the title of Doctor for the first time, 1758.

6. Failed to pass an examination for a subordinate hospital position.

Vocation Found

Goldsmith did some reviewing and translating, and the public began to recognize the writer. In 1759, he published anonymously *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, which gave him a respectable position in the world of letters. Each succeeding work made this position more permanent.

The Literary Club

Formed in 1764. Consisted of nine members, who were to meet together once a week at the Turk's Head, Soho, London.

"When it was at first proposed to enroll Goldsmith among the members of the Literary Club, there seems to have been some demur; at least so says the pompous Hawkins. 'As he wrote for the booksellers, we of the club looked on him as a mere literary drudge, equal to the task of compiling and

translating, but little capable of original and still less of poetical composition.'

"Even for some time after his admission, he continued to be regarded in a dubious light by some of the members. Johnson and Reynolds, of course, were well aware of his merits, nor was Burke a stranger to them; but to the others, he was as yet a sealed book, and the outside was not prepossessing. His ungainly person and awkward manners were against him with men accustomed to the graces of society, and he was not sufficiently at home to give play to his humor and to that bonhomie which won the hearts of all who knew him. He felt strange and out of place in this new sphere; he felt at times the cool, satirical eye of the courtly Beauclerc scanning him, and the more he attempted to appear at his ease, the more awkward he became." — WASHINGTON IRVING, in *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*.

Royal Academy of Arts

Founded in 1768.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, President.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, Honorary Professor of Ancient Literature.

Oliver Goldsmith, Honorary Professor of Ancient History.

There was no salary attached to the position, but it was the highest mark of distinction in Goldsmith's life.

Some of Goldsmith's Friends

1. Dr. Johnson, whom Goldsmith met in 1764, and who became a lifelong friend. *She Stoops to Conquer* was dedicated to him.

2. Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom he dedicated *The Deserted Village*.

3. Edmund Burke, who was a college classmate.

4. Mary Horneck. *The Jessamy Bride*, a novel written by Frankfort Moore, tells the story of Goldsmith's friend-

ship with the Horneck family, and his admiration for Mary Horneck.

Personal Appearance

Homely, face disfigured by smallpox. Short, sturdy, clumsy figure.

Characteristics as a Man

Goldsmith was endowed with great sweetness of temper and a sunny disposition. Many a time was he the victim of his goodness of heart and simplicity of mind. Though he was optimistic and visionary, he was always genuine. His excessive fondness for dress displayed an unlooked-for vanity. As he was extravagant and shiftless, and learned nothing from experience, he was always in debt and trouble. His character lacked the force necessary to carry out a definite purpose, the force necessary to achieve material success.

"Let not his faults be remembered, he was a very good man."—DR. JOHNSON.

"Let them be remembered, since their tendency is to endear."—WASHINGTON IRVING.

As a Conversationalist

He had an Irish brogue, and was a great blunderer. His clumsy and awkward speech has probably been exaggerated by Boswell in his *Life of Johnson*.

"Here lies Poet Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

—DAVID GARRICK.

As a Scholar

He was careless and superficial.

As a Literary Artist

His writings are distinguished for simplicity of diction, beauty of expression, grace of style, and purity of thought. Tender pathos is found side by side with quaint humor.

"How comes it," says a critic, "that in all the miry paths of life Goldsmith had lived, no speck sullied the robe of his modest and graceful Muse? How, amidst all the love of inferior company, which never to the last forsook him, did he keep his genius so free from every touch of vulgarity?"

Irving answers as follows: "It was owing to the innate purity and goodness of his nature; there was nothing in it that assimilated to vice and vulgarity. His relish for humor and for the study of character brought him often into convivial company of a vulgar kind; but he discriminated between their vulgarity and their amusing qualities, or rather wrought from the whole those familiar pictures of life which form the staple of his most popular writings."

Literary Achievements


Goldsmith enriched three departments of literature: fiction, poetry, and the drama. See the chronological list of his works on page xix.

Irving's *Life of Goldsmith* gives interesting anecdotes of the foundation story of *She Stoops to Conquer*, the selling of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and the writing of *Retaliation*.

Death

April 4, 1774, at the age of forty-six. The Literary Club placed a medallion, with his likeness, in Westminster Abbey, over the south door of the Poets' Corner. An epitaph in Latin was written by Dr. Johnson, who said that "he would never disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription." It reads: —

OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,
Poetae, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum fere scribendi genus
Non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit:
Sive risus essent movendi,



Sive lacrymae,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator :
Ingenio sublimis, vividus, versatilis,
Oratione grandis, nitidus, venustus :
Hoc monumento memoriam coluit
Sodaliū amor,
Amicorū fides,
Lectorū veneratio,
Natus in Hiberniā, Forniae Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI.
Eblanae literis institutus ;
Obiit Londini,
Apr. IV. MDCCLXXIV.

NOTE. — The date of Goldsmith's birth is incorrectly given.

THE SCHOOLS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AND GOLDSMITH'S PLACE IN THEM

The two great schools of English literature are the classical and the romantic, connected by a period of about forty years, known as the transitional period. The study of Latin models, especially of Horace, was the keynote of the former school; the study of man and of nature was the keynote of the latter. The literature of the classical school began its development immediately after the Restoration in 1660, and the school held undisputed sway until 1740. The transitional period, from 1740 to 1780, was a period of revolt against classical standards, and of timid effort to give expression to individual and democratic feeling. This revolt and effort culminated in the romantic school, 1780-1837.

The poets of the classical school, which was headed first by Dryden, and then by Pope, sought correctness and elegance of form in their work at the expense of feeling and naturalness. They gave up the various forms of verse used by the Elizabethan poets, and confined themselves almost entirely to a single form, the rhymed couplet. Restrictions as to language made poetical diction abstract and conventional. Subjects of romance and passion, which the Elizabethans had loved, were discarded for worldly themes. Nature poetry, as the romantic school understood it later, was unknown. The motto, "Follow Nature," implied the study of the morals

and manners of polite society. Thus the classical school was essentially aristocratic.

But between 1740 and 1780, a strong protest against all this appeared. Poets began to reassert their right to a natural expression of their feelings and emotions, unhampered by classical rules. Revivals of blank verse and of the sonnet showed that the couplet was no longer considered the only worthy verse form. The world of nature no longer meant the world of polite society, but a world not understood by the classical school—a world of nature and of humanity, full of color, mystery, and emotion. Literature ceased to be aristocratic when its aristocratic tendency was assailed by the democratic spirit of such poets as Goldsmith and Burns.


The romantic school gained even greater triumphs over form, language, and subject-matter. There was great variety of metrical forms—blank verse, sonnets, odes, elegies. Diction was no longer abstract, but vividly concrete. The conventional poetic diction of the classical school was severely attacked by Wordsworth and by Coleridge. The most distinctive characteristic of the romantic school, however, was its interpretation of the motto, "Follow Nature." To this school, the motto meant a spiritual understanding of the world of Nature, a poetical effort to realize Nature as an influence toward beauty and morality. The timid expression of individual feeling seen in the transitional period had strengthened, and the great outburst of lyric poetry showed that poets were determined to follow the bent of their own emotions. During the period of transition, the aristocratic spirit of the classic school had been assailed, but now it

was conquered, for the spirit of the romantic school was emphatically democratic.

The poetical work of Goldsmith belongs to the transitional period, bridging the classical and the romantic schools of literature. In his work the conflict between the two schools is marked. Goldsmith, the man, preferred the romantic school, but Goldsmith, the poet, was influenced by eighteenth-century standards, standards set by the classical school. *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* look back to the classical school for their theme, their form, and their Latin-pastoral flavor, but look forward to the romantic school for simplicity, naturalness, emotion, sympathy, and democratic spirit. Goldsmith's theme in the two poems, "what constitutes a nation's prosperity," is typical of the classical school. He develops his theme and points his moral in the true classical manner. He revels in the rhymed couplet; he sometimes indulges in rhetorical diction; as,

"No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale."

The pastoral atmosphere hovers around his work. On the other hand, *The Deserted Village* pictures a world unknown to the classical school, the little narrow world of the village, where life is simple, natural, and happy. The human emotions of these village folk are strong enough to be felt. The picture is probably an ideal one, yet the description is full of details suggested by actual experience, which give to the whole great reality. Goldsmith's meditation upon the fate of his people, when he relates the tearful story of the wretched exiles, reveals a sympathy for man unfelt by the classical school. In



both poems the democratic spirit of the romantic school is exemplified in the deliberate protest against the oppression of the poor, against luxury, and the evils which follow in its train. Thus *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* take their place in the transitional period, which marks the conflict between the two great schools of English literature.

STYLE AND VERSIFICATION

The style of *The Traveller* and of *The Deserted Village* is touching in its simplicity and sweetness. Goldsmith seemed to have an intuitive sense which caused him to select the right word to give smoothness and music to his lines. But the keynote of his style is grace. His natural expression of thought and feeling takes a polished form. The simple word, the melodious phrase, the graceful expression, all blend together so perfectly that the reader is charmed. Much tenderness and shrewd humorous perception are seen in the descriptions of the village types. The truth of detail in these descriptions is accounted for by Goldsmith's natural sympathy and tenderness and the spirit with which he entered into the surrounding life. Thus the better characteristics of Goldsmith, the man, are the characteristics of Goldsmith, the poet: simplicity, sweetness, grace, tenderness, and humor, — for is not "the style the man"?

The Traveller and *The Deserted Village* are written in the iambic pentameter, sometimes called heroic measure. The line is scanned as follows: —

∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /
 "The heart | distrust | ing asks || if this \ be joy"

The pause, or cæsura, marked thus ||, occurs most commonly after the fourth or the sixth syllable. However, for the artistic use of the meter, variety of position is essential.

The rhymed couplet used by Goldsmith is not so mechanical and artificial as those of his eighteenth-century models, Dryden and Pope. He gives freedom to the movement of his lines by the frequent use of a trochee as the initial foot, and by occasional stresses upon lighter syllables in the verse. His variations belong to the romantic school rather than to the classical.

A melody not found in his models appears in such lines as,

$\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$
 "Sweet was | the sound, || when oft | at even | ing's close,"

$\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$
 "Truth from | his lips | prevailed || with dou | ble sway."

$\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$
 "Sweet as | the prim | rose peeps || beneath | the thorn ;"

\cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$ \cup $\frac{\text{—}}{\text{—}}$
 "Shall kiss | the cup || to pass | it to | the rest."

Again, unlike his models, Goldsmith sought the forceful and simple word, and often obtained his best effects by the use of monosyllables : —

"And tell of all I felt and all I saw."

"Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round."

"Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe."

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE WORKS OF GOLDSMITH

The best edition of Goldsmith's works is *The Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, edited by Peter Cunningham, in four volumes, 1854. This edition was revised by Austin Dobson, 1901. Cunningham and Dobson are the authorities for the titles and the dates of publication given below.

1759. *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe.*

Popular at the time of publication, but of little genuine merit. Contributions to the romantic school in criticism are seen where Goldsmith calls for direct study of the people, for idealization, and for a historical appreciation of literary and social characteristics. In his intense individualism and popular sympathy for man in this work Goldsmith is much like Burns.

1759. October 6–November 24. *The Bee.*

A series of short essays, eight in number, much in the manner of Addison and Steele.

1762. *The Citizen of the World.*

Purports to be the correspondence between a Chinese philosopher, on a visit to England, and his friends at home. In this work Goldsmith disregarded the models of eighteenth-century writers, and sketched his characters from the middle classes. His power of delineating humorous character, which developed more fully in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, is here seen for the first time. In his delineation of "The Man in Black," and especially of Beau Tibbs, who is

an admirable combination of the dandy and the loafer, Goldsmith is nearer to Dickens than to the eighteenth-century novelists. His individualism is more marked here than in his earlier work. The comments of the "citizen of the world" are the comments of Goldsmith on the England of the eighteenth century.

This work was first published in 1760, under the title of "Chinese Letters."

1763. *History of England.*

Written as a series of letters by a nobleman to his son. The work is condensed from long histories for school use, and shows no original research. The style is interesting and graceful.

1764. *The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society.*

1766. *The Vicar of Wakefield.*

A story of simple domestic life. In form, the novel is not of the romantic school, but of the essay style of the time. The rhetorical diction belongs to the classical school. But in spirit, the novel is close to the rural life of the romantic school. The characters and incidents are from common life. The novel preaches virtue, simplicity, and contentment. There is beauty and broad ridicule. There are mutterings of the coming French Revolution in the denunciation of the rich, and in the appeal for sounder conduct. (Chapters XIX and XXVI.)

1768. *The Good-natured Man.* A Comedy.

Very individual, in that many of Goldsmith's own characteristics are exemplified. The comedy was produced at Covent Garden.

1769. *History of Rome.*

Condensed from existing histories for school use in the manner of the *History of England*.

1770. *The Deserted Village.*

1773. *She Stoops to Conquer, or The Mistakes of a Night.*
A Comedy.
Dedicated to Dr. Johnson. The source of the plot is a personal experience of Goldsmith's. In the broad humor of the comedy, Goldsmith breaks away from all restrictions of the classical school, which always seemed shy of a hearty laugh.
1774. *History of Greece.*
Condensed from existing histories for school use, in the manner of the other histories.
1774. *History of the Earth and Animated Nature.*
Hack work, produced for a bookseller, Griffin, in eight volumes. As a work on natural history, the volumes are of little value, but as an expression of Goldsmith's thought and feelings, they are of great interest.
1774. *Retaliation.* A Poem.
His last work, written in retort to some mock epitaphs on himself.

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THE TRAVELLER
OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

DEDICATION

TO THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH.

DEAR SIR, —

I am sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a dedication ; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now with propriety be inscribed only to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it, when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great, and the laborers are but few, while you have left the field of ambition, where the laborers are many and the harvests not worth carrying away. But of all kinds of ambition, — what from the refinement of the times, from differing systems of criticism, and from the divisions of poetry, — that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest.

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations ; but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement, painting and music come in for a share. As

these offer the feeble mind less laborious entertainment, they at first rival poetry, and at length supplant her : they engross all that favor once shown to her ; and though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright.

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in greater dangers from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticism have we not heard of late in favor of blank verses and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests, and iambics, alliterative use and happy negligence ! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it, and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say — for error was ever talkative.

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous ; I mean party. Party entirely distorts the judgment, and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with the disease, it can only find pleasure in what contributes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger, that seldom desists from pursuing man after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader who has once gratified his appetite with calumny makes ever after the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet : his tawdry lampoons are called satires ; his turbulence is said to be his force, and his frenzy, fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavored

to show that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own ; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge, better than yourself, how far these positions are illustrated in this poem.

I am, dear Sir, .

Your most affectionate brother,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THE TRAVELLER

OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheldt or wandering Po ;
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door ;
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies, 5
A weary waste expanding to the skies ;
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee ;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain. 10

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend !
Blest be that spot where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire :
Blest that abode where want and pain repair, 15
And every stranger finds a ready chair :
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crowned,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale ; 20
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destined such delights to share,

My prime of life in wandering spent and care,—
Impelled, with steps unceasing, to pursue 25
Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view,—
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own. 30

Even now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;
And placed on high above the storm's career,
Look downward where an hundred realms appear—
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide, 35
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain? 40
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendor crowned; 45
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round;
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale;
Ye bending swains, that dress the flowery vale;
For me your tributary stores combine:
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine! 50

As some lone miser visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still;

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Thus to my breast alternate passions rise, 55
 Pleased with each good that Heaven to man supplies :
 Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
 To see the hoard of human bliss so small ;
 And oft I wish amidst the scene to find
 Some spot to real happiness consigned, 60
 Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
 May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.

But where to find that happiest spot below
 Who can direct, when all pretend to know ?
 The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone 65
 Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own ;
 Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
 And his long nights of revelry and ease :
 The naked negro, panting at the line,
 Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine, 70
 Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
 And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.

Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam ;
 His first, best country ever is at home.
 And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare, 75
 And estimate the blessings which they share,
 Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
 An equal portion dealt to all mankind ;
 As different good, by art or nature given,
 To different nations makes their blessings even. 80

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
 Still grants her bliss at labor's earnest call ;
 With food as well the peasant is supplied
 On Idra's cliff as Arno's shelvy side ;
 And though the rocky-crested summits frown, 85

These rocks by custom turn to beds of down.
From art more various are the blessings sent —
Wealth, commerce, honor, liberty, content.
Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
That either seems destructive of the rest. 90
Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,
And honor sinks where commerce long prevails.
Hence every state, to one loved blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone.
Each to the favorite happiness attends, 95
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends :
Till, carried to excess in each domain,
This favorite good begets peculiar pain.
But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies : 100
Here for a while my proper cares resigned,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind ;
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.
Far to the right, where Apennine ascends, 105
Bright as the summer, Italy extends :
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride ;
While oft some temple's mouldering tops between
With venerable grandeur mark the scene. 110
Could nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.
Whatever fruits in different climes are found,
That proudly rise or humbly court the ground ;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear, 115
Whose bright succession decks the varied year ;


Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die ;
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil ; 120
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear ; 125
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign :
Though poor, luxurious ; though submissive, vain ;
Though grave, yet trifling ; zealous, yet untrue ;
And even in penance planning sins anew. 130

All evils here contaminate the mind
That opulence departed leaves behind ;
For wealth was theirs, not far removed the date,
When commerce proudly flourished through the state ;
At her command the palace learned to rise, 135
Again the long-fallen column sought the skies,
The canvas glowed, beyond e'en nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teemed with human form ;
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores displayed her sail ; 140
While nought remained of all that riches gave,
But towns unmanned, and lords without a slave :
And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied 145
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride ;
From these the feeble heart and long-fallen mind

An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp arrayed,
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade, 150
Processions formed for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguiled ;
The sports of children satisfy the child.
Each nobler aim, repressed by long control, 155
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul ;
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind :
As in those domes where Cæsars once bore sway,
Defaced by time and tottering in decay, 160
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed ;
And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.
My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey 165
Where rougher climes a nobler race display,
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansion tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.
No product here the barren hills afford
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword ; 170
No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter lingering chills the lap of May ;
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.
Yet still, even here content can spread a charm, 175
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small
He sees his little lot the lot of all ;



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Sees no contiguous palace rear its head
 To shame the meanness of his humble shed ; 180
 No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal
 To make him loathe his vegetable meal ;
 But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
 Each wish contracting fits him to the soil.
 Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose, 185
 Breasts the keen air; and carols as he goes ;
 With patient angle trolls the finny deep ;
 Or drives his venturous plough-share to the steep ;
 Or seeks the den, where snow-tracks mark the way,
 And drags the struggling savage into day. 190
 At night returning, every labor sped,
 He sits him down the monarch of a shed ;
 Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
 His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze ;
 While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard, 195
 Displays her cleanly platter on the board :
 And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
 With many a tale repays the nightly bed.
 Thus every good his native wilds impart,
 Imprints the patriot passion on his heart : 200
 And e'en those ills that round his mansion rise
 Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
 Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
 And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms ;
 And as a child, when scaring sounds molest, 205
 Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
 So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
 But bind him to his native mountains more.

Such are the charms to barren states assigned ;

Their wants but few, their wishes all confined. 210
Yet let them only share the praises due :
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few ;
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.
Hence from such lands each pleasing science flies 215
That first excites desire, and then supplies ;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy ;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve and vibrate through the frame. 220
Their level life is but a smouldering fire,
Unquenched by want, unfanned by strong desire ;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire, 225
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.
But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow :
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low ;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unaltered, unimproved, the manners run, 230
And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest ;
But all the gentler morals, such as play 235
Through life's more cultured walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.
To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn ; and France displays her bright domain. 240

Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe beside the murmuring Loire !
Where shading elms along the margin grew, 245
And freshened from the wave the zephyr flew ;
And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,
But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill ;
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour. 250
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gray grandsire, skilled in gestic lore,
Has frisked beneath the burden of threescore.
So blessed a life these thoughtless realms display ; 255
Thus idly busy rolls their world away.
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honor forms the social temper here :
Honor, that praise which real merit gains,
Or even imaginary worth obtains, 260
Here passes current : paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land :
From courts to camps, to cottages, it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise.
They please, are pleased ; they give to get esteem ; 265
Till, seeming blessed, they grow to what they seem.
But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies room to rise ;
For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought, 270
And the weak soul within itself unblest,

Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart ;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace, 275
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace ;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year ;
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause. 280

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosomed in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land ;
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide, 285
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow ;
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore — 290
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile ;
The slow canal, the yellow blossomed vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain, — 295
A new creation rescued from his reign.

Thus while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain. 300
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,

Are here displayed. There much loved wealth im-
parts

Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts ;
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear, 305
E'en liberty itself is bartered here.

At gold's superior charms all freedom flies ;
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys ;
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonorable graves, 310
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.
Heavens ! how unlike their Belgic sires of old —
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold,
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow : 315
How much unlike the sons of Britain now !

Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring ;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes glide. 320
There all around the gentlest breezes stray ;
There gentle music melts on every spray ;
Creation's mildest charms are there combined,
Extremes are only in the master's mind !
Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state, 325
With daring aims irregularly great ;
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by ;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashioned, fresh from nature's hand, 330
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control,

While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictured here ; 335
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear ;
Too blessed, indeed, were such without alloy :
But fostered even by freedom ills annoy :
That independence Britons prize too high
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie ; 340
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repelled ;
Ferments arise, imprisoned factions roar, 345
Repressed ambition struggles round her shore,
Till, overwrought, the general system feels
Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honor fail to sway, 350
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown :
Till time may come, when, stripped of all her charms, 355
The land of scholars and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toiled and poets wrote for fame.
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonored die, 360

Yet think not, thus when freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great.
Ye powers of truth that bid my soul aspire,

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Far from my bosom drive the low desire !
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel 365
The rabble's rage and tyrant's angry steel ;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt or favor's fostering sun,
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure !
I only would repress them to secure : 370
For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those that toil ;
And all that freedom's highest aims can reach
Is but to lay proportioned loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportioned grow, 375
Its double weight must ruin all below.

O then how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires !
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
Except when fast approaching danger warms ; 380
But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free ;
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw, 385
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law,
The wealth of climes where savage nations roam
Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home ;
Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart ; 390
Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour
When first ambition struck at regal power ;

And thus polluting honor in its source, 395
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore,
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste? 400
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scattered hamlets rose
In barren solitary pomp repose?
Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call 405
The smiling long-frequented village fall?
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decayed,
The modest matron, and the blushing maid,
Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,
To traverse climes beyond the western main; 410
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
And Niagara stuns with thundering sound?

Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
Through tangled forests and through dangerous ways,
Where beasts with man divided empire claim, 415
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go, 420
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind.
Why have I strayed from pleasure and repose, 425

To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure ; 430
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find :
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel, 435
Luke's iron crown, and Damiens' bed of steel,
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.



THE DESERTED VILLAGE

DEDICATION

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

DEAR SIR, —

I can have no expectation, in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of the attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object — and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion — that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I scarce make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains in my country excursions for these four or five years past to be certain of what I allege, and that all my views and in-

quiries have led me to believe those miseries real which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry whether the country be depopulating or not ; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries ; and here, also, I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest material advantages, and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states, by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed, so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that merely for the sake of novelty and variety one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere friend and ardent admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET AUBURN ! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed :
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene,
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, 10
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !
How often have I blessed the coming day, 15
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree ;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed ; 20
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round ;
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired ;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown 25

By holding out to tire each other down ;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place ;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove. 30
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please ;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed :
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green :
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way ;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade —
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride, 55
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man ;
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more : 60
His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered ; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose, 65
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room, 70
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour, 75
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew 80
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care ;
In all my griefs — and God has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, 85
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
To husband out life's taper at the close,

And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill, 90
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;
And as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95
Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blessed retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labor with an age of ease ; 100
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
No surly porter stands in guilty state, 105
To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend ;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way ; 110
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close,
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow, 115
The mingling notes came softened from below ;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,

The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school, 120
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ; —
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail, 125
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring : 130
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;
She only left of all the harmless train, 135
The sad historian of the pensive plain !

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place ;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power, 145
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;

He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain ; 150
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;
The broken soldier kindly bade to stay, 155
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ; 160
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call, 165
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all ;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise, 175
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place ;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray. 180

The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed, 185
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed ;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay —
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule, 195
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;
I knew him well, and every truant knew :
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face ; 200
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew :
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher, too :
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge. 210
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,

For, even though vanquished, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew, 215
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225
The parlor splendors of that festive place :
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door ;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ; 230
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers and fennel gay ;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show, 235
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendors ! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall ?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart. 240
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;

No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail ;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear, 245
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear ;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train,
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art :
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play, 255
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway ;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed— 260
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey 265
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting folly hails them from her shore ; 270
Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name

That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride 275
Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds :
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth ;
His seat where solitary sports are seen, 281
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green ;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies ;
While thus the land adorned for pleasure all 285
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slight's every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes ; 290
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress,
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed : 295
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise ;
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band, 300
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah ! where, shall poverty reside,
To escape the pressure of contiguous pride ?

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

35

If to some common's fenceless limits strayed 305
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there?
 To see profusion that he must not share ; 310
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
 To pamper luxury and thin mankind ;
 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know,
 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.

Here while the courtier glitters in brocade, 315
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;
 Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.

The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,
 Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train ; 320
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
 Sure these denote one universal joy !

Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn thine
 eyes 325

Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blessed,
 Has wept at tales of innocence distressed ;
 Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ; 330
 Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
 Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
 And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the
 shower,

With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn,— thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread ! 340

Ah, no ! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.

Far different there from all that charmed before 345
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;


Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing ;
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ; 350

Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 355
And savage men more murderous still than they ;

While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360

The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven ! what sorrows gloomed that parting
day,



That called them from their native walks away ;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep. 370
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 375
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose, 380
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury ! thou curst by Heaven's decree, 385
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee !
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy !
Kingdoms, by thee to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own. 390
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe ;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun, 395
And half the business of destruction done ;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail
That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there ;
And piety, with wishes placed above, 405
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ; 410
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel, 415
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
Farewell, and O ! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime ;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain ;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;
Teach him, that states of native strength possessed, 425

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

39

Though very poor, may still be very blessed ;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole away ;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

430

NOTES

THE TRAVELLER

The Traveller, published in December, 1764, was the first work to which Goldsmith signed his name. The poem was begun in 1755, while the poet was wandering over the continent, but its evolution was slow. The finished product proves the wisdom of Goldsmith's repeated careful revisions and retouchings, extending over a period of about ten years.

Irving, in his *Life of Goldsmith*, says: "The appearance of *The Traveller* at once altered Goldsmith's intellectual standing in the estimation of society; but its effect upon the club, if we may judge from the account given by Hawkins, was almost ludicrous. They were lost in astonishment that a 'newspaper essayist' and 'book-seller's drudge' should have written such a poem. On the evening of its announcement to them, Goldsmith had gone away early, after 'rattling away as usual,' and they knew not how to reconcile his heedless garrulity with the scenic beauty, the easy grace, the sound good-sense, and the occasional elevation of his poetry. They could scarcely believe that such magic numbers had flowed from a man to whom in general, says Johnson, 'it was with difficulty they could give a hearing.' 'Well,' exclaimed Chamier, 'I do believe he wrote the poem himself, and let me tell you, that is believing a great deal.'"

1. **Slow.** In Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, we find the following anecdote: "In 1764, immediately after the publication of *The Traveller*, at the first meeting of the Literary Club, Chamier asked: 'Mr. Goldsmith, what do you mean by the last word in the first line of your *Traveller*? Do you mean tardiness of locomotion?' 'Yes,' answered Goldsmith, who was always easily confused and consequently often spoke at random. 'No, sir,' interrupted Johnson, who was always ready with an opinion, 'you did

not mean tardiness of locomotion; you meant that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude,' 'Ah, that was what I meant,' said Goldsmith, accepting without a murmur Johnson's interpretation. This incident led many of the members of the Literary Club to believe that Johnson himself wrote the line, but Johnson, at the request of Boswell, indicated the lines, nine in all, which he contributed to the poem." Attention will be called to the lines in these notes.

2. Or . . . or. Used in poetry. Latin in origin.

Scheldt, Po. The Scheldt River rises in France and, flowing north through Belgium and Holland, empties into the North Sea. The Po rises in the western part of Italy and flows east to the Adriatic Sea. These rivers indicate the boundaries of the travels described in the poem.

3. **Carinthian.** Carinthia is a province in the southwestern part of Austria, east of the Tyrol. "Carinthia was visited by Goldsmith in 1755, and still retains its character for inhospitality." — PETER CUNNINGHAM.

5. **Campania.** Probably the Campagna, a very low plain near Rome.

9. **Brother.** Henry Goldsmith. See Dedication of the poem.

10. **A lengthening chain.** Cf. *The Citizen of the World*. III: "The farther I travel, I feel the pain of separation with stronger force: those ties that bind me to my native country and you are still unbroken. By every remove I only drag a greater length of chain."

13-22. **Blest be, etc.** Cf. *The Deserted Village*, ll. 149-152, where the same idea is more fully developed.

15. **Want and pain.** What figure of speech?

23. **Me.** The object of what verb?

26. **Some fleeting good, etc.** Cf. *The Bee*, Number I: "When will my restless disposition give me leave to enjoy the present hour? When at Lyons, I thought all happiness lay beyond the Alps; when in Italy, I found myself still in want of something, and expected to leave solitude behind me by going into Roumelia; and now you find me turning back, still expecting ease everywhere but where I am."

27. **Like the circle bounding earth and skies.** What two figures are combined?

32. **I sit me down.** Reflexive use of the pronoun. Cf. *The Deserted Village*, l. 86.

33. **Above the storm's career.** Some peak of the Alps, which towers above the clouds. Cf. *The Deserted Village*, ll. 188-190.

34. **An hundred realms.** Goldsmith always uses *an* before *h*, when sounded.

41. **School-taught pride.** The pride felt by the Stoic philosopher, who has conquered himself and the chances of life.

45-48. **Ye glittering towns, etc.** What figure of speech?

48. **Ye bending swains.** The swains, or peasants, bend as they plough or work in the soil. Cf. *The Deserted Village*, l. 2.

57. **Prevails.** Conquers one.

Sorrows fall. Tears. Cf. *rising raptures*, l. 53.

58. **Bliss.** A favorite word with Goldsmith.

60. **Consigned.** Assigned.

69. **The line.** Equator.

84. **Idra's Cliff.** Probably Idria, a town of Austro-Hungary, whose steep slopes are rich in quicksilver mines.

Arno's shelvy side. A river flowing through the most fertile part of Italy. *Shelvy* means sloping. Hence the contrast is made between the steep slopes of Idria and the gently sloping side of the Arno. The thought is, that it is possible to obtain a living in sterile Idria as well as in productive Arno.

87. **Art.** In contrast to *Nature*, l. 81.

90. **Either.** Loosely used. "Perhaps *either* may be justified by supposing the blessings just enumerated are to be considered as divided in a twofold manner: (1) the one prevailing; (2) the others cast into the shade by the prevailing one." — HALES.

91-92. **Where wealth, etc.** Specific instances of the statement made in line 90.

101. **My proper cares.** Personal cares in contrast to *mankind*, l. 102.

105. **Apennine.** The Apennine Mountains in Italy.

108. **In gay theatric pride.** Hales remarks as follows: "The

stage often borrows similes and metaphors from nature; here nature is made indebted to the stage."

116. **The varied year.** The seasons.

118. **Vernal lives.** Lives as short as the spring season.

121. **Gelid.** Gold: not a poetic word; it savors of the classical school.

122. **To winnow fragrance.** To scatter, or diffuse it.

123. **Bliss.** The thought is, that the pleasure given by the senses is small compared with intellectual pleasure.

127. **Manners.** Mode of life.

129. **Zealous.** Religious.

134. **When commerce proudly flourished.** In the fifteenth century Italy was the leading commercial country.

135. **At her command.** The revival of architecture, painting, and sculpture in Italy during the fifteenth century.

136. **Long-fallen.** Reference is made to the fall of Rome.

139-140. **Till, more unsteady,** etc. The main causes of the decline of Italian commercial activity are said to be, (1) Magellan's discovery of a sea route to Italy around the Cape of Good Hope in 1497; and (2) the discovery of America.

143. **Skill.** Knowledge.

144. **Plethoric ill.** Cf. *The Citizen of the World*: "In short, the state resembled one of those bodies bloated with disease, whose bulk is only a symptom of its wretchedness; their former opulence only rendered them more impotent."

146. **Arts.** Fine arts. Cf. l. 304.

150. **The pasteboard triumph.** Reference is made to the carnival in contrast to the famous triumphs of Rome in the past, as in the time of Cæsar.

153. **By sports like these,** etc. Irving's *Life of Goldsmith* gives the following anecdote: "We hear much about 'poetic inspiration,' and the 'poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling'; but Sir Joshua Reynolds gives an anecdote of Goldsmith while engaged upon his poem [*The Traveller*] calculated to cure our notions about the ardor of composition. Calling upon the poet one day, he opened the door without ceremony, and found him in the double occupation of turning a couplet and teaching a pet dog to

sit upon his haunches. At one time he would glance at his desk, and at another shake his finger at the dog to make him retain his position. The last lines were still wet; they form a part of the description of Italy:—

‘By sports like these are all our cares beguiled,
The sports of children satisfy the child.’

Goldsmith, with his usual good humor, joined in the laugh caused by his whimsical employment, and acknowledged that his boyish sport with the dog suggested the stanza.”

159. Domes. Used here in its original sense of house, palace. From the Latin *domus*. Cf. Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, l. 2:—

“In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree.”

167. Bleak Swiss. What figure of speech?

Mansion. Abiding place.

Compare the thoughts here with the following from Macaulay's *History of England*, XIII: “Goldsmith was one of the very few Saxons who more than a century ago ventured to explore the Highlands. He was disgusted by the hideous wilderness and declared that he greatly preferred the charming country round Leyden, the vast expanse of verdant meadow, and the villas with their statues and grottoes, trim flower-beds and rectilinear avenues. Yet it is difficult to believe that the author of *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* was naturally inferior in taste and sensibility to the thousands of clerks and milliners who are now thrown into raptures by the sight of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond.”

170. Man and steel, the soldier and his sword. From the seventeenth century the Swiss have served as mercenaries, and thus found means to support their families, who otherwise must have suffered for many necessities of life.

176. Redress. Make amends for.

186. Breasts. A verb. Consult Johnson's Dictionary.

187. Finny deep. What figure of speech? Cf. *bleak Swiss*, l. 167.

190. **Savage.** Savage beast. Cf. *The Citizen of the World*, I: "Drive the reluctant savage into the toils." *Savage* is used as a noun when reference is made to human beings, but very rarely otherwise.

191. **Sped.** Carried through with success.

198. **The nightly bed.** For the night.

203. **Conforms.** Suit itself.

213. **For every want that stimulates the breast.** Cf. *Animated Nature*, II: "Every want becomes a means of pleasure in the redressing."

221. **Level.** Unvaried.

232. **Fall.** Account for the plural form of the verb.

234. **Cowering.** Not *afraid*, but *brooding*.

243. **Choir.** The choral dance.

253. **Gestic lore.** Was a good dancer.

256. **Idly busy.** A rhetorical figure called oxymoron. Consult a rhetoric.

263. **From courts to camps, to cottages.** What figure of speech?

265-266. **They please, etc.** "There is perhaps no couplet in English rhyme more perspicuously condensed than those two lines of *The Traveller*, in which he describes the once flattering, vain, and happy character of the French."—CAMPBELL'S *Specimens of the British Poets*.

273. **Tawdry.** Consult a dictionary on the interesting origin of the word.

276. **Frieze.** Woollen cloth of coarse tissue.

277. **Cheer.** Good face.

280. **Self-applause.** Self-satisfaction, conceit. Cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*, IV, l. 255:—

"One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas."

281. **My fancy flies, etc.** "Nothing can equal its [Holland's] beauty; wherever I turn my eyes, fine houses, elegant gardens, statues, grottoes, vistas, present themselves; but when you enter their towers you are charmed beyond description. No misery is

to be seen here; every one is usefully employed." — *The Citizen of the World*.

286. **Rampire's.** Rampart, dikes.

296. **A new creation rescued from his reign.** Cf. *Animated Nature*, Chap. III: "The whole kingdom of Holland seems to be a conquest on the sea, and in a manner rescued from its bosom. The surface of the earth in this country is below the level of the bed of the sea; and I remember upon approaching the coast to have looked down upon it from the sea as into a valley."

297. **Wave-subjected.** Submerged by floods.

303. **Are.** Account for the number of the verb.

306. **Liberty . . . is bartered.** Probably reference is made to the custom in Holland which allowed parents to sell their children's labor for a certain number of years.

309. **A land of tyrants.** Cf. *The Citizen of the World*, I: "A nation once famous for setting the world an example of freedom is now become a land of tyrants and a den of slaves."

313. **Belgic sires.** Compare the thought here with Goldsmith's *History of the Seven Years' War*, Introduction: "How unlike the brave peasants, their ancestors, who spread terror in India, and always declared themselves the allies of those who drew the sword in defence of freedom!"

319. **Lawns.** Cf. *The Deserted Village*, l. 35.

Arcadian. Arcadia, situated in the southern part of Greece, has always been regarded by the poets as the home of simplicity and beauty.

320. **Hydaspes.** A river in India, now called Jelus, a tributary of the Indus.

345. **Ferments arise.** Political disturbances. Cf. *The Citizen of the World*, II: "It is extremely difficult to induce a number of free beings to coöperate for their mutual benefit: every possible advantage will necessarily be sought, and every attempt to procure it must be attended with a new fermentation."

351. **Fictitious.** Artificial.

357. **Stems.** Families.

362. **Flatter kings.** Compare Goldsmith's *History of England*, Preface: "In the things I have hitherto written, I have neither

allured the vanity of the great by flattery, nor satisfied the malignity of the vulgar by scandal; but have endeavored to get an honest reputation by liberal pursuits."

382. Regal power, etc. Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, XIX: "It is in the interest of the great to diminish kingly power as much as possible."

Also Goldsmith's *History of England*, Preface: "It is not yet decided in politics whether the diminution of kingly power in England tends to increase the happiness or freedom of the people. For my own part, from seeing the bad effects of the tyranny of the great in those republican states that pretend to be free, I cannot help wishing that our monarchs may still be allowed to enjoy the power of controlling the encroachments of the great at home."

386. Laws grind, etc. Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, XIX: "What they may then expect may be seen by turning our eyes to Holland, Genoa, or Venice, where the laws govern the poor, and the rich govern the law."

411. Oswego. Cf. Goldsmith's *Threnodia Augustatis*, II, 82:—

"Oh! let me fly a land that spurns the brave,
Oswego's dreary shores shall be my grave."

412. Niagara. The meter required the name to be pronounced Niagára—a pronunciation still heard in England.

420. To stop, etc. The line was written by Johnson.

429-438. Also written by Johnson with the exception of lines 435, 436.

436. Luke's iron crown. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, two brothers, George and Luke Dora, headed an insurrection against the Hungarian nobility. George was proclaimed king of Hungary, and as a punishment had a red-hot iron crown placed on his head. Goldsmith uses Luke instead of George, perhaps for the sake of the meter.

Damiens' bed of steel. In 1757, Robert François Damiens attempted to assassinate Louis XV of France. In order to extort from him the names of his fellow-conspirators, he was laid upon a hot bed of steel.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

The *Public Advertiser* of May 26, 1770, contained the following notice: "This day at 12 will be published, price two shillings, 'The Deserted Village,' a Poem. By Doctor Goldsmith. Printed for W. Griffin, at Garrick's Head in Catherine Street, Strand." At this time, Goldsmith, who was in his forty-second year, was at the height of his literary fame. The success of the poem was greater than that of *The Traveller*, which had been published six years before.

There is a certain resemblance between these companion poems. In *The Traveller*, Goldsmith contrasts conditions in different countries. In *The Deserted Village*, he limits himself to contrasting conditions in one country, his own. True to his eighteenth-century theme, "What constitutes a nation's prosperity," Goldsmith thought the political-economic side of *The Deserted Village* the best feature of the poem, but posterity thinks the pictures of old types its lasting quality.

"Sweet Auburn" is generally thought to be a memory picture of Lissoy, where Goldsmith lived in his boyhood, and where his brother Henry settled later as preacher and teacher. There has been much discussion on the subject, because the picture resembles an English hamlet more than an Irish village. Goldsmith, writing the poem at Islington, probably confused his rural English surroundings with his memories of Lissoy.

William Howitt, who visited Lissoy, says in his *Haunts and Homes of the British Poets* (page 203): "In all Goldsmith's description of his Auburn, he has clearly blended the Doric charm of the English village and English scenery with the fond boyish memories of his actual native place. He has evidently intended to represent the scene as in England, or at all events to make his poem of general application, though he has drawn on his memory for features connected with his native place, and imparted soul and sentiment to it by indulging the feelings of old affectionate regard. Thus the alehouse, the parsonage, the mill, the brook, the village green, the schoolmaster, the pious clergyman, were all portions of his native place, and actual inhabitants of it, yet

mixed with touches from the later observations of his English life. The very circumstances of depopulation, which no doubt had occurred at Lissoy and had sunk deep into his indignant heart, he tells us, in his dedication to Sir Joshua Reynolds, was going on in England, and that his description meant to apply to England."

But all this is rather immaterial. It is the beauty of the poem itself which we wish to see, to understand, and to appreciate. Foster says that Goldsmith "looked into his heart and wrote." So by knowing the poem we shall know the man, and shall be benefited by our knowledge of both.

1. **Auburn.** Lissoy, a parish in Kilkenny West, eight miles north of Athlone.

3-4. **Where smiling spring,** etc. Lines beautiful in thought and expression.

4. **Parting.** Old English. Poetic license for *departing*. Cf. l. 363; also Gray's "Elegy," l. 1 and 89:—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies."

5. **Bowers.** A rustic cottage; an attractive retreat. Here used for *homes*.

10. **Cot.** A small house; a cottage.

15. **The coming day.** Some saint's day; a holiday, looked forward to as a festival occasion.

17. **Train.** From the Latin *traho*, to draw. It means a long-drawn line. A favorite word with Goldsmith, occurring seven times in the poem.

21. **Gambol.** A skipping about in frolic; a sportive prank.

22. **Sleights.** Skilful feats. Used now in the phrase "sleight of hand." Cf. *Macbeth*, III, v, 26:—

"And that distill'd by magic sleights
Shall raise such artificial sprites."

23. **Still.** The meaning is *yet*, a meaning common in the eighteenth century.

25. **Simply.** Artlessly.

27. **Mistrustless.** Unconscious. Doubtless these same sports are still to be seen in rural country life in England. Read "A London Suburb" in Hawthorne's *Our Old Home*. There is a resemblance between Hawthorne's description of Greenwich Fair, and the "Sweet Auburn" of the poem.

35. **Lawn.** Cf. *plain*, l. 1.

40. **Tillage.** Cultivated land.

42. **Works its weedy way.** Eighteenth-century poets were very fond of alliteration.

44. **The hollow-sounding bittern.** Cf. what Goldsmith says in his *Animated Nature*: "Those who have walked on an evening by the sedgy sides of unfrequented rivers must remember a variety of notes from different water-fowl; the loud scream of the wild goose, the croaking of the mallard, the whining of the lapwing, and the tremulous neighing of the jack-snipe. But of all these sounds there is none so dismally hollow as the booming of the bittern."

45. **Lapwing.** A plover-like bird.

51. **Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey.** This line has been criticised as inartistic. Why?

52. **When wealth accumulates and men decay.** This subject was near to Goldsmith's heart, and is discussed by him time and again. Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, XIX: "An accumulation of wealth, however, must necessarily be the consequence, when, as at present, more riches flow in from external commerce than arise from internal industry; for external commerce can only be managed to advantage by the rich, and they have also at the same time all the emoluments arising from internal industry; so that the rich, with us, have two sources of wealth, whereas the poor have but one. For this reason, wealth, in all commercial states, is found to accumulate, and all such have hitherto in time become aristocratical."

53-54. **Princes and lords, etc.** Cf. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" by Burns, XIX, 3:—

"Princes and lords are but the breath of kings."

Also Burns's "A Man's a Man for a' That," IV:—

"A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;

But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith, he manna fa' that."

58. **Rood.** Same as *rod*.

63. **Train.** Singular in form, but plural in thought; hence the plural form of the verbs.

74. **Manner.** Meaning here not *behavior*, but *customs*. Goldsmith probably used the word for the sake of alliteration.

87. **Husband out life's taper at the close.** The meaning here is to use savingly. Cf. *Macbeth*, II, 1, 4:—

"There's husbandry in heaven;
Their candles are all out."

89-90. **I still had hopes**, etc. Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, XXIV: "Let him see that I was a scholar."

101-102. **Who quits**, etc. Attention has been called to the fact that Goldsmith had many favorite words, which he used over and over again. He also repeated many phrases and thoughts. Compare the thought expressed here with the following lines from *The Bee*: "By struggling with misfortune, we are sure to receive some wound in the conflict: the only method to come off victorious is by running away."

107. **His latter end.** Old age.

110. **While resignation**, etc. The picture of "Resignation" by Sir Joshua Reynolds bears the following inscription: "This attempt to express a character in *The Deserted Village* (lines 109-112) is dedicated to Dr. Goldsmith by his sincere friend and admirer, Joshua Reynolds."

124. **The nightingale.** Cf. the following from his *Animated Nature*: "The nightingale's pausing song would be the proper epithet for this bird's music." The nightingale is not found in Ireland, but the poet writing in England mingled his English surroundings with his recollections of Lissoy.

127. **No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale.** The diction here is rather prosy and rhetorical, in the manner of the classical school.

129. **Yon widowed, solitary thing.** Supposed to be Catherine Geraghty. The reference to one person in a solitary condition adds to the loneliness of the picture.

137-192. Goldsmith drew the picture of the village preacher from his father and his brother Henry, who seem to have been very much alike in character. The poem was written shortly after the death of Henry Goldsmith.

137. **Copse.** From the French *couper*, to cut. Means brush-wood cut for fuel.

142. **And passing rich with forty pounds a year.** *Passing* means exceedingly. Forty pounds was the average salary of an eighteenth-century curate. Cf. the stipend received by Dr. Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Also the dedication to *The Traveller*, referring to his brother Henry.

145. **Unpractised he to fawn.** A Latin construction, much used by eighteenth-century poets.

173. **Champion.** From the Latin *campus*, a field, or a place for fighting. The word here means the defender of a passing spirit against evil.

176. **Accents.** Words. Cf. Longfellow's "Excelsior":—

"And like a silver clarion rung,
The accents of that unknown tongue."

180. **And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.** Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, XXVII: "Some were penitent, and all attentive."

189. **As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form.** A powerful and sublime comparison.

194. **Furze.** A shrub having yellow flowers.

195. **Skilled to rule.** See note on line 145.

196. **The village master.** This is supposed to be Thomas Byrne, Goldsmith's boyhood teacher. Byrne's yarns may have suggested the description of the "broken soldier" (ll. 155-158). Read the account of Byrne in Irving's *Life of Goldsmith*.

205-206. **ought . . . fault.** In Ireland and rural England, the sound of *l* is omitted in *fault*. With this explanation *ought*, *fault*, is a perfect rhyme.

209 Terms and tides presage. The *terms* were sessions of the universities or law courts. The *tides* were times or seasons in the ecclesiastical year.

210. Gauge. Measure the capacity of casks, or barrels, from their dimensions. Both Burns and Hawthorne performed this duty as excise commissioners.

221. That house. The village inn.

Nut-brown. A favorite figure with poets. Cf. Milton's "L'Allegro," l. 100:—

"Then to the spicy nut-brown ale."

Also the old English ballad, "The Nut-brown Maid."

232. The twelve good rules. These rules, ascribed to Charles I, were generally hung in public houses. They were: 1. Urge no healths. 2. Profane no divine ordinances. 3. Touch no state matters. 4. Reveal no secrets. 5. Pick no quarrels. 6. Make no comparisons. 7. Maintain no ill opinions. 8. Keep no bad company. 9. Encourage no vice. 10. Make no long meals. 11. Repeat no grievances. 12. Lay no wagers.

The royal game of goose. This game was played by two persons on a board something like the modern checkerboard, in that it was divided into sixty-two squares. On every fourth and fifth square a goose was painted, and if the player's dice fell on a goose, he might move on twice as many squares as the number thrown.

234. Fennel. An aromatic plant.

236. Glistened in a row. Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, IV: "Besides, as it, parlor and kitchen in one, was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates, and coppers being well scoured and all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was relieved, and did not want richer furniture."

244. The woodman's ballad. Woodman does not mean a wood-chopper, but one who knows the woods; as a hunter. The ballad was probably some song of Robin Hood.

248. The mantling bliss. Joy that included all.

250. Shall kiss the cup. To touch the cup with the lips before drinking. Cf. Scott's *Marmion*, V, 12:—

"The bride kissed the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup."

259. Pomp. The word has here its first meaning of procession. From the Greek *pempōs*.

264. The heart distrusting asks if this be joy. Considered by some critics as the most beautiful line in the poem.

267-268. Cf. the following from *The Citizen of the World*: "There is a wide difference between a conquering and a flourishing empire."

287. Female. This word was a common word for woman in the eighteenth century.

Plain. Simple and retiring.

288. Secure to please. Confident of pleasing. See note on line 145.

290. Solicitous to bless. By bestowing her hand in marriage. See note on line 145.

298. Vistas. The view through the trees.

316. Artist. In Goldsmith's time the term was applied to workmen engaged in the mechanic arts.

322. Chariots. Carriages.

Torches. Before the introduction of stationary street lamps, people of fashion in London were attended by link-boys, or boys with torches.

330. Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn. Beautiful, poetic imagination, typical of the romantic school.

343-358. Through torrid tracts, etc. Goldsmith did not have a very definite notion of America. He here refers to the colony of Georgia, founded in 1732 by General Oglethorpe. At the time the poem was written, the General was inviting many distressed debtors in England to seek homes in his colony.

344. The Altama is the Altamaha River, one of the boundaries of Georgia.

355. Crouching tigers. As far as locality is concerned, Goldsmith's ideas of natural history are not clear. Possibly here he meant the jaguar or the puma.

368. Seats. Homes; from the Latin *sedes*.

398. **I see**, etc. Goldsmith pictures an emigrant band departing for America. The figure is known as "vision."

400. **Flaps**. A very effective onomatopoeic word.

411. **Dear charming nymph**. Poetry, personified as a mythological divinity.

418. **Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side**. The River Torno, or Tornea, is on the boundary line between Sweden and Russia. Pambamarca is a mountain in Ecuador, near Quito. Goldsmith thus expresses a wish that the influence of poetry may extend over the whole world.

427-430. These lines are heavy and rhetorical in the manner of the classical school. They were written by Dr. Johnson, who thought that the poem did not end with enough force. See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*: "Dr. Johnson favored me at the same time by marking the lines which he furnished to Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, which are only the last four."

QUESTIONS

THE TRAVELLER

1. What is the general plan of the poem?
2. Contrast the poet's restless life with the quiet life of his brother Henry.
3. What does the poet's wish for a spot of real happiness show of his character?
4. Discuss the claims made by the dwellers in each region.
5. What is the patriot's boast, and why is it questioned?
6. How is the truth of the matter tested?
7. Interpret what the poet sees in Italy, ll. 105-164; in Switzerland, ll. 165-238; in France, ll. 239-280; in Holland, ll. 281-316 in Britain, ll. 317-334.
8. Why does no one land offer complete happiness?
9. Where, according to the poet, is true happiness and contentment to be found?
10. What do you consider the most beautiful passage in the poem in thought? In expression?

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

11. Contrast Auburn when it was the "loveliest village of the plain" with the later Auburn, in regard to its appearance and the condition of the people.
12. Why does the poet praise the rural sports?
13. What does the poet consider the cause of the changes he laments?
14. Show how the contrast presented by happy Auburn and desolate Auburn is extended to the country of England.
15. What insight into the poet's character do you get from his opinion of the influence of wealth?

16. Is the poet's most cherished wish in harmony with what you know of his character?
17. Give a character sketch of the village preacher.
18. What is the poet's ideal of a useful, happy life?
19. After reading the account of "Paddy" Byrne in Irving's *Life of Goldsmith*, see if you can find any evidence that the poet had a model in mind when he described the schoolmaster.
20. Describe the village inn.
21. Contrast the simple, natural pleasures of country life with those of luxury and wealth.
22. What, according to the poet, is the ultimate result of fashionable splendor?
23. Is the appeal to statesmen consistent with the progress of civilization?
24. Is the description of the poor man's fruitless efforts to find a place for himself overdrawn?
25. What experiences of the poet would justify his picture of the evils of city life?
26. Is his picture of the desolate lot of the emigrant overdrawn?
27. What has luxury displaced?
28. In the poet's mind, what conditions are essential for the Genius of true poetry?
29. What appeal does he make to poetry?
30. What do you consider the most beautiful passages in the poem? Are they beautiful because of beauty of sentiment? Choice of words? Figurative language? Rhythm?

SUBJECTS FOR PARAGRAPHS AND COMPOSITIONS

NARRATION

1. Auburn Tells the Story of her Desolation.
2. The Broken Soldier's Story.
3. The Auburn Emigrant's Account of his Wanderings.
4. Goldsmith and the Tulip Bulbs.

5. Goldsmith and his Fiddle on the Continent.
6. Goldsmith's Experiences as a Doctor.
7. The Selling of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.
8. Goldsmith and the Jessamy Bride.

DESCRIPTION

1. Auburn, a Happy Country Village.
2. Auburn, a Desolated Village.
3. England in Happy Times.
4. The Village Preacher.
5. An Eighteenth-century Pedagogue.
6. An Eighteenth-century Village Inn.
7. A Survey of Holland by Goldsmith.
8. The Wanderer Viewing the World from the Alps.

EXPOSITION

1. Rural Sports.
2. The Happiness of Village Life.
3. Education in an Eighteenth-century English Village.
4. The Importance of the Village Inn of the Eighteenth Century.
5. Goldsmith's Opinion of the Evil Results of Luxury.
6. Goldsmith's Ideal of Happiness.
7. Conditions in Italy as Seen by Goldsmith.
8. A Characterization of the English People by Goldsmith.

ARGUMENTATION

1. Wealth has Many Evil Results.
2. The Poor cannot be Happy in the City.
3. The Rich are not so Happy as the Poor.
4. Goldsmith Reveals himself in his Writings.
5. The Literary Club was an Important Factor in Eighteenth-century Literature.
6. The Friendship of Sir Joshua Reynolds was Helpful to Goldsmith.
7. Goldsmith was More of a Romanticist than a Classicist.
8. Goldsmith Wrote like a Journalist.

QUOTATIONS

SELECTED FOR BEAUTY OF THOUGHT AND GRACE OF EXPRESSION

THE TRAVELLER

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."

"My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own."

"Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam;
His first, best country ever is at home."

"Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at labor's earnest call ; "

"Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,
And honor sinks when commerce long prevails."

"The sports of children satisfy the child ; "

"But winter lingering chills the lap of May ; "

"At night returning, every labor sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;
While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board :

And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed."

"If few their wants, their pleasures are but few."

"They please, are pleased, they give to get esteem,
Till seeming blessed, they grow to what they seem."

"For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought."

"And industry begets a love of gain."

"At gold's superior charms all freedom flies;
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys:"

"Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the laws."

"Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind."

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade:
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

"His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth."

"Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray."

"Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning's face;
Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee,

At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned,
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault,
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too!
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge;
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew."

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."

"And even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy."

"The country blooms — a garden and a grave."

"Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn."

"And slighted truth with thy persuasive strain,
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possessed,
Though very poor, may still be very blessed."

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A
COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned,
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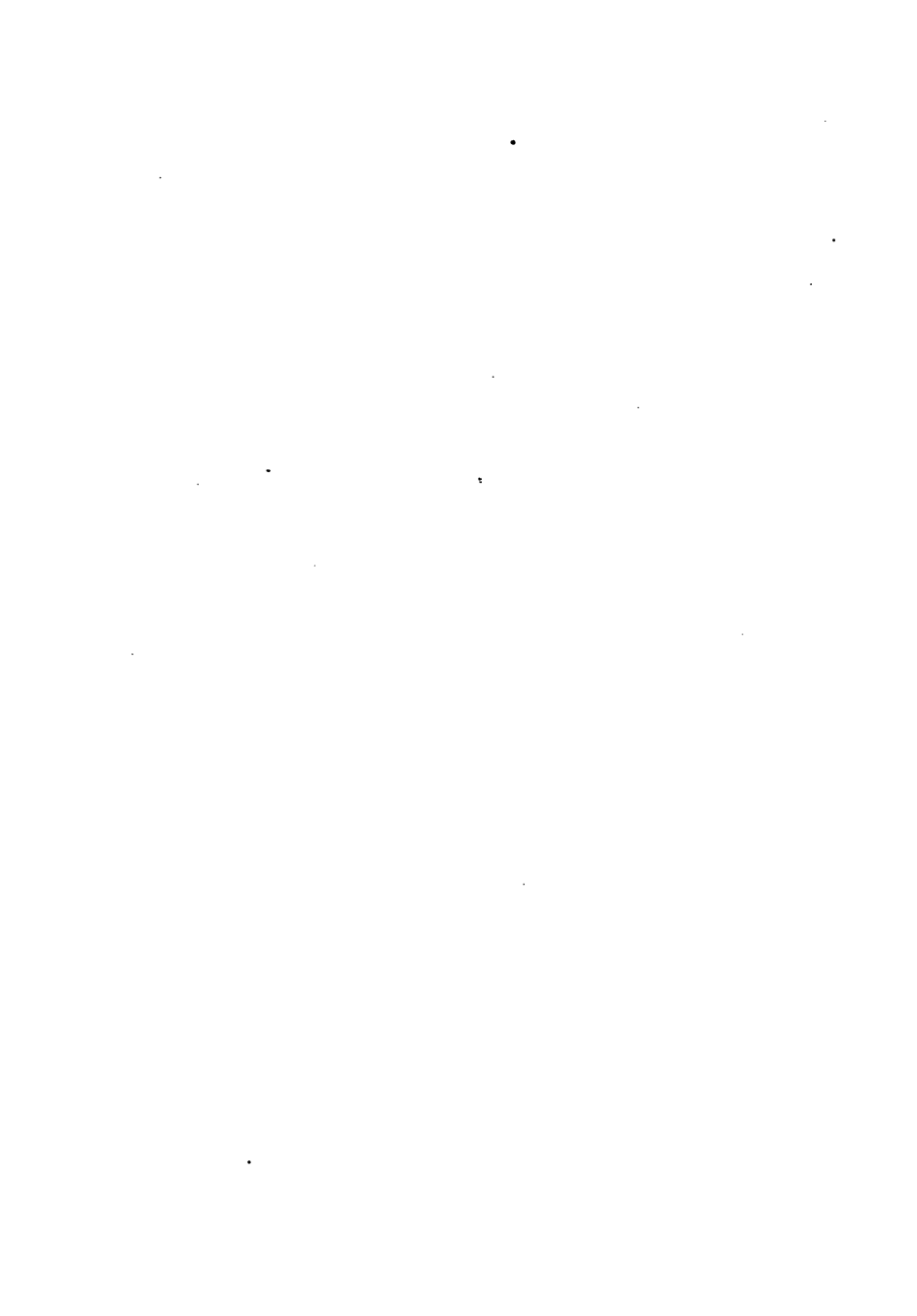
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1







Gray

INTRODUCTION

LIFE OF THOMAS GRAY

1716-1771

Birth

December 26, 1716, at Cornhill, London.

Parents

Mother: Dorothy Autrobus, who at the time of her marriage kept a millinery shop in Cornhill. A loving and industrious woman.

Father: Philip Gray, a wealthy money scrivener. A selfish, brutal, and negligent husband and father.

The Gray Family

Twelve children, of whom Thomas was the fifth. All died in infancy, except the poet. •

Education

1. Eton, under the care of his mother's brother, Mr. Autrobus, assistant to the Master of Eton. His companions and friends were Richard West, son of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and Horace Walpole, son of Sir Robert Walpole.

2. Peterhouse, Cambridge, 1734-1738. A pensioner. Studied classical literature, history, and modern languages. Did not study mathematics, and consequently took no degree.

"Gray never was a boy. A pale, quiet, studious lad, careless of his health and enamoured of learning. Such was Gray in his school days and college life. He was a student and moralist, while other boys were cricket players and healthy

animals. At twenty, he wrote a Latin theme in seventy-three hexameter lines that describes the mood of man as one of hesitation between the things of heaven and the things of earth. The thoughts are borrowed from Horace and Pope, but the verses are melodious and foreshadow the moral and elegiac style of his maturer years."—HORACE WALPOLE.

Travels

From April, 1739, to September, 1741, for two and a half years, Gray was the travelling companion and guest of Horace Walpole, on a tour through France, Italy, and Switzerland. These were the healthiest and happiest years of his life.

At Reggio the travellers quarrelled and parted. Walpole took the blame of the quarrel on himself, and a reconciliation was effected some years later.

Permanent Home

At Pembroke Hall, Cambridge.

"His father died in November, 1741, and it was found that the poet's fortune would not enable him to prosecute the study of law, as he had intended. He therefore retired to Cambridge and fixed his residence at the university. There he continued for the remainder of his life, with the exception of about two years spent in London, when the treasures of the British Museum were thrown open. At Cambridge, he had the range of noble libraries. His happiness consisted in study, and he perused with critical attention the Greek and Roman poets, philosophers, historians, and orators."—ROBERT CARRUTHERS, in *Life of Thomas Gray*.

Vacations at Stoke-Pogis

"It is at Stoke-Pogis that we seek the most attractive vestiges of Gray. Here he used to spend his vacations, not only when a youth at Eton, but during the whole of his future life, while his mother and his aunts lived. Here it was that his

"Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," his celebrated "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and his "Long Story" were not only written, but were mingled with the circumstances and all the tenderest feelings of his own life.

"His mother and aunts lived at an old-fashioned house in a very retired spot at Stoke, called West End. This house stood in a hollow, much screened by trees. A small stream ran through the garden, and it is said that Gray used to employ himself when here much in this garden, and that many of the trees still remaining are of his planting. On one side of the house extended an upland field, which was planted round so as to give a charming retired walk. At the summit of the field was raised an artificial mound, and upon it was built a sort of arcade or summer-house, which gave full prospects of Windsor and Eton. Here Gray used to delight to sit; here he was accustomed to read and write much; and it is just the place to inspire the Ode on Eton College, which lay in the midst of its fine landscape, beautifully in view. The old house inhabited by Gray and his mother has been pulled down and replaced by an Elizabethan mansion by the present proprietor, Mr. Penn, of Stoke Park, just by. The garden, of course, has shared in the change, and now stands gay with its fountain and its modern greenhouse, and, excepting for some fine trees, no longer reminds you of Gray. The woodland walk still remains round the adjoining field, and the summer-house on its summit, though now much cracked by time and only held together by iron cramps. The trees are now so lofty that they completely obstruct the view, and shut out both Eton and Windsor." — HOWITT, in *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets*.

Honors

Refused the Poet Laureateship in 1757.

Professor of modern history at Cambridge from 1768 until his death, in 1771. Delivered no lectures.

Gray, the Man

"It is easy to fancy the recluse poet sitting in his college chamber in the old quadrangle of Pembroke Hall. His windows are ornamented with mignonette and choice flowers in china vases, but outside may be discerned some iron-work, intended to be serviceable as a fire-escape, for he has a horror of fire. His furniture is neat and select; his books, rather for use than for show, are disposed around him. He has a harpsichord in the room. In the corner of one of the apartments is a trunk containing his deceased mother's dresses, carefully folded up and preserved. His fastidiousness, bordering upon effeminacy, is visible in his gait and manner—in his handsome features and small, well-dressed person, especially when he walks abroad and sinks the author and hard student in 'the gentleman who sometimes writes for his own amusement.'"—ROBERT CARRUTHERS, in *Life of Thomas Gray*.

Death

At Pembroke Hall, July 30, 1771, at the age of fifty-four.

Monuments

Buried at his own request in the same tomb with his mother and aunt, in Stoke-Pogis cemetery. On the slate slab over the tomb are the following lines, inscribed by Gray:—

"In the vault beneath are deposited, in hope of a joyful resurrection, the remains of Mary Autrobus. She died unmarried, Nov. 5, 1749, aged sixty-six. In the same pious confidence, beside her friend and sister, here sleep the remains of Dorothy Gray, widow; the careful, tender mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her. She died, March 11, 1753, aged LXXII."

In 1799, Mr. Penn erected a small slab in the wall, under the southeast window, recording the fact that the plain brick altar tomb also contains the ashes of Gray.

A monument to Gray was erected by Mr. Penn, in the same year, near the entrance of Stoke Park, at the right of the lodge. "This (in the words of Howitt in his *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets*) is composed of fine freestone, and consists of a large sarcophagus, supported on a square pedestal, with inscriptions on each side. Three of them are selected from the Ode on Eton College and the Elegy. The fourth bears this inscription : —

This Monument in honor of
Thomas Gray
Was erected A.D. 1799,
Among the scenes
Celebrated by that great Lyric and Elegiac Poet.
He died July 30, 1771,
And lies unnoted in the Churchyard adjoining,
Under the Tombstone on which he piously
And pathetically recorded the interment
Of his Aunt and lamented Mother."

In 1778 the Rev. W. Mason, Gray's friend and biographer, erected a monument in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. It is a medallion of Gray, and is inscribed by Mason as follows : —

No more the Grecian muse unrivalled reigns,
To Britain let the nations homage pay ;
She felt a Homer's fire in Milton's strains,
A Pindar's rapture in the lyre of Gray.

Some of Gray's Works, with Dates of Publication

- 1742. "Ode to Spring."
- 1742. "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College."
- 1742. "Hymn to Adversity."

1747. "On a Favorite Cat."
The cat belonged to Horace Walpole, who at that time was living at Windsor.
1751. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."
1754. "The Progress of Poetry."
1757. "The Bard."
1761. "The Fatal Sisters."
1764. "The Descent of Odin."
1764. "Triumphs of Owen."
1775. Letters.
Gray was an interesting diarist and letter-writer.
1814. "Observations on English Metre."
Probably written in 1761.

GRAY'S PLACE IN LITERATURE

Like Goldsmith, Gray belongs to the transitional period between the classical and the romantic schools of literature, as he combines in his work tendencies and characteristics of both schools. His literary activity shows three distinct phases, proclaiming him a seer of romanticism, though living in the age of classicism.

In the first phase of Gray's literary activity, the influence of the classical leaders, Dryden and Pope, is very marked. The poems of 1742 — "Ode on the Spring," "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and "Hymn to Adversity" — are classical in form and in spirit. The regularity and monotony of the rhythm belong to the classical school. The moralizing, the abstract personifications, proclaim eighteenth-century models.

The second phase is marked by the *Elegy*, in 1751. This poem is clearly transitional between the two schools of literature. The form is that of classicism, faultless and regular; but the spirit is the spirit of romanticism, simple and natural. The influence of Milton replaces in part the influence of Dryden and Pope. There are few personifications, and the diction is concrete in imagery. The democratic spirit of the romantic school is seen in the use of the names of Hampden, Milton, and Cromwell, instead of Greek and Latin heroes. "The Progress of Poetry" and "The Bard" also belong to this phase. Their romantic themes and evolution, the feeling, the imagination, and the freedom portrayed in them, did not appeal to the classical school, and these poems added little to Gray's fame during his lifetime.

The third phase of his literary activity received its inspiration from the poet's growing interest in Norse mythology. He

studied both the Icelandic language and the Welsh. The results of this interest and study were translations, — lyrics purely romantic in form and in spirit, — “The Fatal Sisters,” “The Descent of Odin,” and “The Triumphs of Owen.”

As a scholar and an eighteenth-century writer, it was difficult for Gray to get away from the critical principles of an age of prose and classical standards; but as a man and a poetic genius, he broke loose from conventional rules. Love of nature, sympathy for the lowly, vivid imagination, and deep emotion are found in classical settings.

Though broad in his intellectual interests, Gray wrote comparatively little. His place in literature is due not to great literary activity, but to purity and beauty of style and thought. Matthew Arnold says: “Gray holds his high rank as a poet not merely by the grace and beauty of passages in his poems; not merely by a diction generally pure in an age of impure diction; he holds it, above all, by the power and skill with which the evolution of his poems is conducted. . . . He is alone, or almost alone, in his age. Gray said himself that the style he aimed at was extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical. Compared not with the work of the great masters of the golden ages of poetry, but with the poetry of his own contemporaries, in general, Gray may be said to have reached in his style the excellence at which he aimed; while the evolution also of such a piece as his ‘Progress of Poetry’ must be accounted not less noble and sound in its style.”

TRIBUTES TO THE ELEGY

“On the night of September 13, 1759, the night before the battle on the Plains of Abraham, Wolfe was descending the St. Lawrence with a part of his troops. Swiftly, but silently, did the boats fall down with the tide, unobserved by the enemy’s sentinels at their post along the shore. Of the sol-

diers on board, how eagerly must every heart have throbbed at the coming conflict! How intently must every eye have contemplated the dark outline, as it lay pencilled upon the midnight sky, and as every moment it grew closer and clearer, of the hostile heights! Not a word was spoken — not a sound heard beyond the rippling of the stream. Wolfe alone — thus tradition has told us — repeated in a low tone to the other officers in his boat those beautiful stanzas with which a country churchyard inspired the muse of Gray. One noble line, 'The paths of glory lead but to the grave,' must have seemed at such a moment fraught with mournful meaning. At the close of the recitation, Wolfe added, 'Now, gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec.' — LORD MAHON, in *History of England*.

"The Elegy is perhaps the most widely known poem in our language. The reason of this extensive popularity is perhaps to be sought in the fact that it expresses in an exquisite manner feelings and thoughts that are universal. . . . It deals with them in no lofty, philosophical manner, but in a simple, unpretentious way, always with the truest and broadest humanity. The poet's thoughts turn to the poor; he forgets the fine tombs inside the church, and thinks only of the 'mouldering heaps' in the churchyard. Hence the problem that especially suggests itself is the potential greatness, when they lived, of the 'rude forefathers' that now lie at his feet. He does not, and cannot, solve it, though he finds considerations to mitigate the sadness it must inspire; but he expresses it in all its awfulness in the most effective language and with the deepest feeling; and his expression of it has become a living part of all languages." — HALES, in his edition of the Elegy.

"The Elegy has exercised an influence on all the poetry of Europe from Denmark to Italy, from France to Russia. With the exception of certain works of Byron and Shakspeare, no English poem has been so widely admired and imitated abroad." — EDMUND GOSSE, in *Life of Gray*.

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ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the
sight, 5
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain 10
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid, 15
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn, 20
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke :
How jocund did they drive their team afield !
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ; 30
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour. 35
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

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But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ; 50
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear :
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood ;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade : nor circumscribed alone 65
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind ;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense, kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life 75
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply :
And many a holy text around she strews
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey, 85
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ; 90
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led, 95
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say :
" Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

" There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

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"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn, 105
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
Now drooping, woful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree ; 110
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

"The next, with dirges due, in sad array,
Slow through the churchway path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay 115
Graved on the stone beneath yon agéd thorn."

The Epitaph

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown ;
Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,
And melancholy marked him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send :
He gave to misery all he had, a tear :
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a
friend.

No further seek his merits to disclose, 125
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.



NOTES

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The evolution of the Elegy was very slow, for Gray spent about eight years perfecting its lines. Begun in 1742, the poem was not finished until 1750. Gray sent the poem, when completed, to his friend Horace Walpole, with a letter saying: "Having put an end to a thing, whose beginning you have seen long ago, I immediately send it to you. You will, I hope, look upon it in the light of a thing with an end to it; a merit that most of my writings have wanted and are like to want."

The *Magazine of Magazines* wished to publish the poem, but Gray desired to escape publicity. He therefore requested Walpole to have Dodsley, the famous London printer, publish the poem anonymously. The Elegy was accordingly published in February, 1751, in a quarto pamphlet. Walpole wrote the advertisement which appeared in the title page. It reads as follows:—

"The following poem came into my hands by accident, if the general approbation with which this little piece has been spread may be called by so slight a term as accident. It is this approbation which makes it unnecessary for me to make any apology but to the author: as he cannot but feel some satisfaction in having pleased so many readers already. I flatter myself he will forgive my communicating that pleasure to many more."

In spite of Gray's ruse, the poem appeared in the February number of the *Magazine of Magazines*, in the March number of the *London Magazine*, and in the April number of the *Grand Magazine of Magazines*. So great was the popularity of the poem that within two years twelve editions were published in English alone. Since then the editions have been too numerous to count. Pro-

fessor Henry Reed gives a list of translations: one in Hebrew, seven in Greek, twelve in Latin, thirteen in Italian, fifteen in French, six in German, and one in Portuguese.

1. **Curfew.** Cf. Longfellow's translation of Dante's "Purgatory," Canto VIII:—

"from far away a bell
That seemeth to deplore the dying day."

The custom in England of ringing a curfew dates back to the Middle Ages. Hales writes: "It is a great mistake to suppose that the ringing of the curfew was at its institution a mark of Norman oppression. If such a custom was unknown before the Conquest, it only shows that the old English police was less well-regulated than that of many parts of the Continent, and how much the superior civilization of the Norman-French was needed. Fires were the curse of the timber-built towns of the Middle Ages. The enforced extinction of domestic lights at an appointed signal was designed to be a safeguard against them."

Parting. Departing. Cf. *The Deserted Village*, ll. 4 and 171.

2. **Lowing.** The calling sound of cattle.

Wind. Late editions have *winds* instead of *wind*, but there seems to be no authority for the change. The reading *wind* makes a better picture, as we see the different animals in the herd, and not the herd *en masse*.

Lea. A grassy field, or meadow.

6. **Air.** Object of the verb *holds*.

7. **Save when the beetle,** etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, III. ii. 43:—

"ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hum,
Hath rung night's yawning peal."

8. **Folds.** Flocks of sheep.

13. **That yew-tree's shade.** "The yew-tree under which Gray often sat in Stoke churchyard still exists there: it is on the south side of the church, its branches spread over a large circumference, and under it, as well as under its shade, there are several graves."
—BRADSHAW.

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16. **Rude forefathers.** *Rude* means rustic.

"As Gray stands in the churchyard, he thinks only of the poorer people, because the better-to-do lay interred inside the church. . . . In Gray's time, and long before, and some time after it, the former resting-place was for the poor, the latter for the rich." — HALES.

17. **Incense-breathing morn.** The morning breeze laden with the fragrance of flowers.

18. **Clarion.** A clear, shrill note.

Echoing horn. The echo of a horn blown by some early hunter.

20. **Lowly bed.** Not the "narrow cell," or grave, but the bed on which they sleep.

22. **Ply her evening care.** *Ply* is poetic license for *apply*.

"To ply a care is an expression that is not proper to our language, and was probably formed for the rhyme *share*." — MITFORD.

23. **No children, etc.** Cf. Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night," ll. 21, 22: —

"Th' expectant wec-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' fichterin noise an' glee."

26. **The stubborn glebe has broke.** *Glebe* means ground. *Broke* is poetic license for *broken*. Consult Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, p. 343.

29-32. **Let not Ambition, etc.** Burns used this stanza as a motto for "The Cotter's Saturday Night." Though the stanza is a famous one, the rhymes are very poor. *Obscure* does not rhyme with *poor*, nor does *toil* rhyme with *smile*.

32. **Annals of the Poor.** This has been taken as the title of a book by Leigh Richmond.

33-36. **The boast of heraldry, etc.** Cf. Richard West's "Monody on Queen Caroline," which Mitford suggests Gray may have had in mind when he wrote the stanza: —

"Ah, me! what boots us all our boasted power,
Our golden treasure, and our purple state;
They cannot ward the inevitable hour,
Nor stay the fearful violence of fate."

35. **Hour.** Subject of *awaits*.

36. **The paths of glory lead but to the grave.** "This line is literally translated from the Latin prose of Bartholinus in his *Danish Antiquities*." — HAYLEY'S "Life of Crashaw," *Biographia Britannica*.

37. **Impute to these the fault.** Charge, or attribute, the fault to the poor.

39. **Fretted.** Ornamented with relief, or raised work.

40. **The pealing anthem.** Cf. Milton's "Il Penseroso," l. 159: —

"There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthem clear."

41. **Storied urn.** Stories pictured on the urn. Cf. Milton's "Il Penseroso," l. 156: —

— "storied windows richly dight."

Animated bust. Lifelike marble.

42. **Mansion.** What figure of speech?

43. **Provoke.** From the Latin *provocare*. Used in the original meaning, to call forth.

46. **Pregnant with celestial fire.** Full of holy enthusiasm.

51. **Rage.** Often used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for inspiration, enthusiasm.

53-56. **Full many a gem, etc.** A beautiful stanza. Though Gray was not the originator of the thought, his was the genius that gave the thought its polished and perfect utterance.

Cf. Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, VI, 872; Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, IV, i, 158; Young's *Universal Passions*, V; Waller's song, "Go, Lovely Rose."

57. **Hampden.** A cousin of Cromwell. In 1636, he refused to pay the ship-money tax, which Charles I, without authority from Parliament, was levying upon the people.

59. **Milton.** Macaulay, in his "Essay on Milton," says that Milton was living at a cottage in the village of Chalfont St. Giles, a few

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miles from Stoke-Pogis, when he put the finishing touches to his *Paradise Lost*.

60. Cromwell. "The prejudice against Cromwell was extremely strong throughout the eighteenth century, even amongst the more liberal-minded. . . . His wise statesmanship, his unceasing earnestness, his high-minded purpose, were not yet seen." — HALES.

66. Their growing virtues. The growth of their virtues.

70. To quench the blushes. Cf. Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, IV, iii, 2:—

"Come quench your blushes and present yourself."

Ingenuous. Honorable.

72. Muse. Poetry.

73. Far from the madding crowd. Thomas Hardy has taken this as the title of a novel. *Madding* means tumultuous. The correct form of the word, of course, is *maddening*.

78. Still. Always.

81. Spelled by the unlettered muse. The epitaphs on the tombstones in the Stoke-Pogis churchyard are ridiculous because of the incorrect spelling of the words.

85-88. For who, etc. *Prey* is in apposition with *who*, and not with *being*. So the meaning of the stanza is: who, yielding himself up a prey to dumb forgetfulness, ever resigned this life, without casting a longing, lingering look behind?

89-92. On some fond breast, etc. "In this stanza, Gray answers in an exquisite manner the question of the preceding stanza. . . . What he would say is that every one while a spark of life yet remains in him yearns for some kindly loving remembrance; nay, even after the spark is quenched, even when all is dust and ashes, that yearning must still be felt." — HALES.

"It has been suggested that the first line of this stanza seems to regard the near approach of death; the second, its actual advent; the third, the time immediately succeeding its advent; the fourth, a time still later." — *Gray's Poetical Works*, edited by BRADSHAW, p. 225.

95. Chance. Perchance.

100. Upland lawn. A cleared place on the higher ground in the wood. Cf. Milton's "Lycidas," ll. 25, 26: —

— "ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn."

101, 103. Beech and stretch do not make a perfect rhyme.

105-112. Hard by yon wood, etc. These two stanzas form a part of the epitaph on the monument to Gray, erected by the Penn family in Stoke Park.

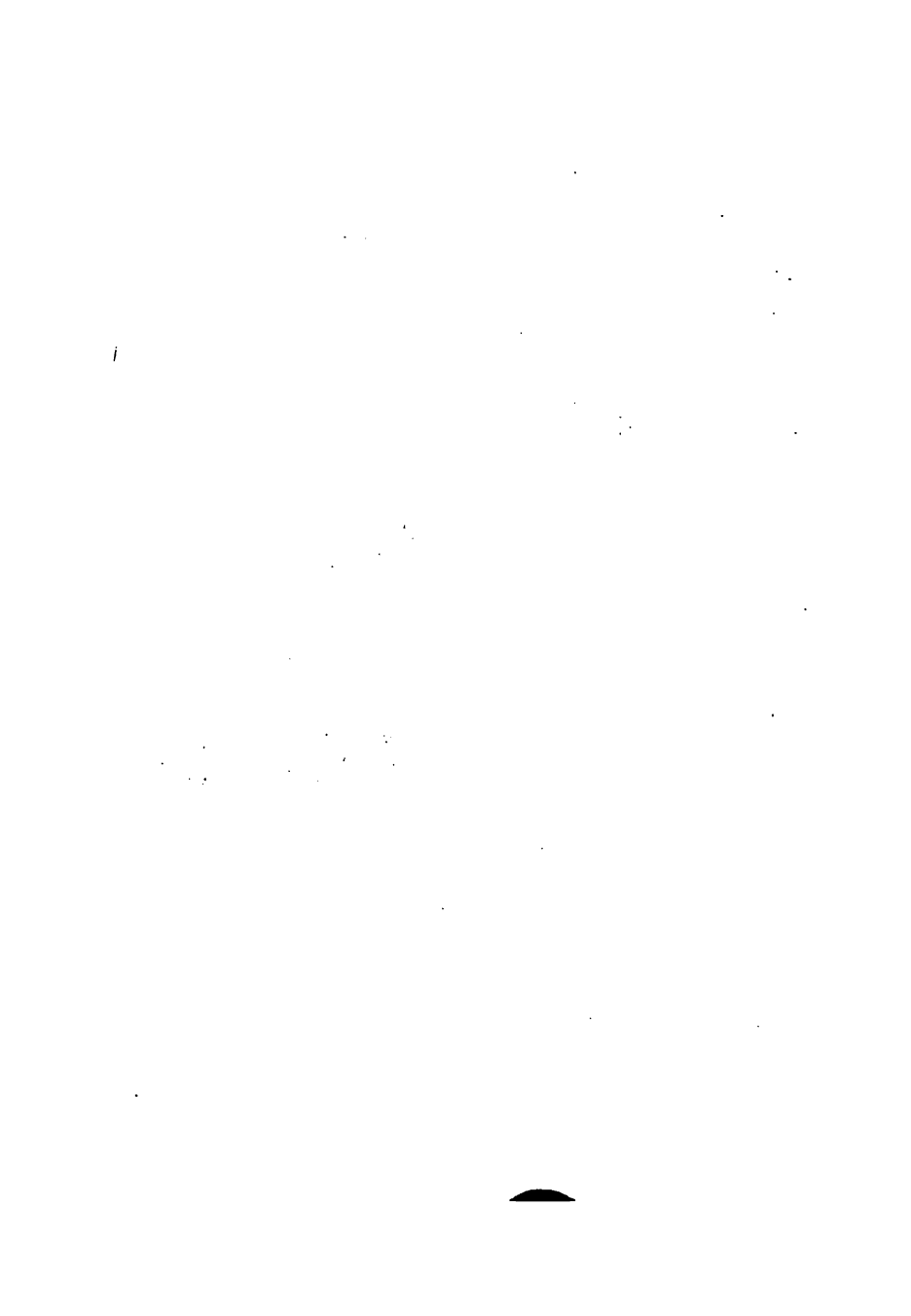
115. For thou canst read. You can read, but the "hoary-headed swain" could not.

116. Graved. In good use, but not as common as *graven*.

119. Science. One branch of knowledge is used for knowledge in general. What figure of speech?

Frowned not. Looked kindly upon.

126. Draw. An infinitive, parallel in structure with *to disclose*.



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